

PROPOSED 2015 CITY OF WICHITA STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

City Council Workshop

Nov. 25, 2014

Dale Goter

Government Relations Manager



ISSUE CATEGORIES

- ❖ 1) Community Budget Issues
- ❖ 2) Water Issues
- ❖ 3) State/Local Government Relationship
- ❖ 4) New Policy Initiatives

1) Community Budget Issues

- ❖ AFFORDABLE AIRFARES
- ❖ NIAR (National Institute for Aviation Research)
- ❖ NCAT (National Center for Aviation Training)
- ❖ PASSENGER RAIL
- ❖ EXPORT PROMOTION
- ❖ IDA (Individual Development Accounts)

Affordable Airfares

- **ISSUE:** The community's relationship with Southwest Airlines is at a critical juncture. Southwest has been in market since June 2013 and have indicated they need three years for the market to mature. The Wichita airport performance is acknowledged for its unique performance in growth and capacity (Bill Swelbar presentation at WSU Economic Conference). Wichita fares are now lower than OKC and Tulsa and in line with US average. Since 2002, Affordable Airfares has provided \$1.446 billion in savings for Wichita Mid-Continent air travelers.

Affordable Airfares

- **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports \$5 million in state funding for the Affordable Airfares program in the 2016 state budget.

NIAR, NCAT

- ❖ **ISSUE:** State funding for the National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) and National Center for Aviation Training (NCAT) is essential for the success of the respective programs.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports continued state grant funding for NIAR and NCAT. (\$5 million each)
- ❖ Additionally, the Council supports full funding of Senate Bill 155 (2012) and the Board of Regents funding formula and opposes any budget proviso that interferes with the Postsecondary Tiered Technical State Aid Cost Model.

Passenger Rail

- ❖ **ISSUE:** A federal TIGER grant application was not successful, but it did identify funding support from Kansas and Oklahoma departments of transportation. An alternative to federal funding is necessary to complete the environmental study.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council encourages the Kansas Legislature and the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) to find the necessary funding for completion of the environmental study of the proposed Heartland Flyer passenger rail extension from Oklahoma City to Wichita/Newton.

Export Promotion

- ❖ **ISSUE:** Kansas Global was awarded a \$250,000 contract funded by the 2014 state legislature. The goal is to identify potential exporters in the Kansas business community, and to encourage and assist them in entering the international trade market. Increased exports are a proven element in the creation of new jobs.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports continued state funding for a contractual relationship between the Kansas Department of Commerce and Kansas Global Trade Services.

Individual Development Accounts

- ❖ **ISSUE:** The Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) is a tool to teach financial literacy by promoting long term self-sufficiency among low-income clients of Housing and Community Services. IDAs provide matching-fund savings accounts used for the purchase of a high-return investment such as homeownership. Individual tax credits in support of IDAs were eliminated by recent legislation. Business tax credits were sustained, but are insufficient to maintain current program levels. Interfaith Housing Services (IHS) in Hutchinson is proposing a restoration of the individual credits. IDAs assist low-income clients.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports restoration of individual tax credits for Individual Development Accounts. The program is administered by IHS on behalf of the Housing and Community Services Department.

2) Water Issues

- ❖ Governor's 50 Year Water Plan
- ❖ City of Wichita regulatory remedies
- ❖ State Water Plan Re-evaluation

50-Year Water Plan

- ❖ The Wichita City Council supports the creation of a 50-year state water plan and encourages the legislative and executive branches of state government to officially recognize the significance of the Equus Beds Aquifer as a regional water supply serving 20 percent of the state's population. The City Council encourages the State of Kansas to assess the State's role and responsibilities in the preservation and maintenance of the Equus Beds Aquifer.

Equus Beds Regulatory Remedies

- ❖ The Wichita City Council encourages resolution of several regulatory issues impacting the future use of the Equus Beds Aquifer (delineated in Public Works and Utilities letter to Department of Agriculture and state Water Office.)

State Water Plan Re-Evaluation

- ❖ Continuing its position from the past two years, the Wichita City Council encourages a re-evaluation of state Water Fund governance, collection and distribution.

3) State/Local Government Relationship

- ❖ Local Control/Home Rule
- ❖ Economic Development
- ❖ Transportation

Local Control/Home Rule

- ❖ **ISSUE:** Recent legislative sessions have generated numerous initiatives that would preempt local government's authority to resolve local issues.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports the position of the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) regarding the preservation of home rule authority by local governments to meet the needs of the citizens they represent.

Economic Development

- ❖ **ISSUE:** The State of Kansas provides economic development incentives through a variety of programs.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports the continuation of state economic incentive programs that assist local governments in their efforts to improve their local economies.

Transportation

- ❖ **ISSUE:** In past years, state transportation funds have been redirected to the state General Fund to meet revenue shortfalls.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports the full execution of the T-WORKS transportation plan currently administered by the Kansas Department of Transportation. The Council also discourages the redirection of dedicated transportation funds to the state General Fund. T-WORKS funds resulting from lower-than-expected bids should be reserved for use on other transportation projects identified by the T-WORKS program.

4) New Policy Initiatives

- ❖ Driver's Permits
- ❖ Disabled Veterans Parking
- ❖ Metal Theft
- ❖ Cultural Arts Districts
- ❖ Massage Parlors
- ❖ Driving While Suspended "Lookback"
- ❖ Blight

Driver's Permits

- ❖ **ISSUE:** Undocumented workers perform an essential service in agriculture, construction and throughout our economy. Reasonable provisions should be made to accommodate their transportation needs.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports legislation that provides a driver's permit to undocumented workers for the sole purpose of obtaining vehicle insurance for work-related transportation.

Disabled Veterans Parking

- ❖ **ISSUE:** Current state law provides free parking for disabled veterans at metered locations. Legislation is needed to provide free parking for disabled veterans at attended parking facilities such as Wichita's Mid-Continent Airport.
- ❖ **RECOMMENDATION:** The Wichita City Council supports state legislation that provides free parking to qualified disabled veterans in parking facilities monitored by an attendant.

Metal Theft

- ❖ **ISSUE:** Metal theft continues to be a major problem throughout our community.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council encourages legislative solutions regarding metal theft. The City of Wichita will work with the District Attorney in the formation of legislative solutions and support their enactment.

Cultural Arts Districts

- ❖ **ISSUE:** Cultural arts enterprises in certain areas are threatened by rising property values and the resulting tax burden.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports state legislation that would allow local governments to use innovative measures to protect cultural arts enterprises from circumstantial increases in property taxes. The intent is to nurture and preserve arts activity throughout the City of Wichita and the State of Kansas.

Massage Parlors

- ❖ **ISSUE:** Kansas is one of a handful of states without any licensing for massage therapists. Law enforcement has concerns that an unregulated environment facilitates human trafficking and similar illegal activity.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports legislation requiring state licensing of massage therapists. Such legislation should retain the authority of municipalities to regulate this industry as needed to address local law enforcement and public health concerns.

Driving While Suspended (DWS)

- ❖ **ISSUE:** Under current law, DWS convictions are never removed from a driver's record. This situation is contradictory to other penalties and is an undue hardship on drivers. Third-offense DWS convictions result in mandatory jail sentences.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports legislative action to provide a defined “lookback” period for third-offense Driving While Suspended convictions, allowing removal of the third offense from the driver's record.

Blight

- ❖ **ISSUE:** Residential and commercial blight is a statewide concern in communities of all sizes.
- ❖ **RECOMMEND:** The Wichita City Council supports proposed legislation (reintroduction of HB2075 from 2014 session) that provides an expedited foreclosure process for abandoned and neglected tax delinquent properties. The Council also encourages the Legislature to coordinate a broad overview of blight legislation to address the varied concerns of communities across the state of Kansas.